

null
Diana T Fritz 05/24/2007 04:34:27 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

Cable
Text:

UNCLASSIFIED

SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

April 09, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1724 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: OPRC, PREL, CASC, KPAO
Captions: None
Subject: WHILE ROME BURNS, UAE CAMPUS FIDDLES, CALMLY
Ref: None

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 01724

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: PAO
INFO: CONS POL AMB DCM RSO
Laser1:
ACTION: PAO
INFO: CONS

DISSEMINATION: PAO
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MAHBA
DRAFTED: PAO:TPONCE
CLEARED: PAO:KVANDEVATE

VZCZCADI228
RR RUEHC RUEHZM
DE RUEHAD #1724 0991219
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 091219Z APR 03
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9345
INFO RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 001724

SIPDIS

FOR NEA/PPD WMOONEY, ACASPER, DMACINNES, JBERRY; NEA/ARP
LMALENAS; NEA/RA; IIP; R; CA/OCS/ACS/NESA PMGILLEN;

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [PREL](#) [CASC](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: WHILE ROME BURNS, UAE CAMPUS FIDDLES, CALMLY

11. SUMMARY: THE ABU DHABI CAMPUS AT THE UAE'S ZAYED UNIVERSITY (ZU) FOR WOMEN RECENTLY HELD A STUDENT BAZAAR TO EXHIBIT STUDENT PROJECTS AND ARTWORKS AND TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE UAE RED CRESCENT SOCIETY'S HUMANITARIAN AID DRIVE FOR IRAQI CHILDREN. DURING THE BAZAAR, APAO DISCUSSED LOCAL EVENTS AND THE WAR IN IRAQ WITH ZU STUDENTS, STAFF, FACULTY, AND ADMINISTRATORS. WHILE FRUSTRATION WITH THE WAR IN IRAQ AND DISMAY AT IMAGES OF IRAQI CIVILIAN CASUALTIES SIMMER BELOW THE SURFACE, LIFE AT ZU IS BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR EMIRATI STUDENTS, ARAB EXPATRIATE STAFF, AND WESTERN FACULTY. END SUMMARY.

12. ZU'S FEMALE STUDENTS, INCLUDING DAUGHTERS OF UAE ELITE, AVOIDED DISCUSSION OF THE WAR IN IRAQ WITH APAO. INSTEAD, SEVERAL STUDENTS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO KNEW PAS STAFF PERSONALLY,

TALKED WITH APAO ABOUT THE YOUNG AMBASSADORS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL VISITORS EXCHANGE PROGRAMS. ZU STUDENTS SEEMED MORE CONCERNED WITH INVITING US TO LOOK AT THEIR ARTWORK, TELLING US ABOUT THEIR POETRY, OR URGING US TO VOTE IN A CONTEST TO CHOOSE A BEST DRAWING RATHER THAN ENGAGING ON IRAQI CIVILIAN CASUALTIES, THE WAR IN IRAQ, AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY.

13. NEVERTHELESS, ZU STUDENTS REMAIN VERY CONCERNED WITH THE PLIGHT OF THE IRAQI PEOPLE AND, IN PARTICULAR, IRAQI CHILDREN. ONE OF ZU'S AMERICAN ADMINISTRATORS INFORMED APAO THAT "LOUDER, MORE RAUCOUS, AND PARTICIPATORY EVENTS" HAD BEEN PLANNED BY THE ZU STUDENT COUNCIL FOR THE BAZAAR. HOWEVER, THE CAMPUS ADMINISTRATOR PUT A HALT TO THESE EVENTS AFTER RECEIVING A CALL FROM THE HIGHEST LEVELS. WHILE THE RESULT WAS A STUDENT BAZAAR ONE WOULD EXPECT AT ANY UNIVERSITY, THE ZU STUDENT COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT RESIGNED AS COORDINATOR OF THE EVENT TO PROTEST THE ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION TO BAR THE PLANNED ACTIVITIES. THE OFFICIAL ALSO EXPLAINED THAT STUDENTS HAD PLANNED A PEACE VIGIL LATER IN THE WEEK, BUT THIS WAS ALSO DENIED PERMISSION.

14. THE ADMINISTRATOR FURTHER NOTED THAT THE AMERICAN FACULTY WERE NOT UNCOMFORTABLE WITH LOCAL POLITICAL CONDITIONS. WHILE NOTING TAXI DRIVERS SEEMED "MORE DISTANT" THAN USUAL, THE OFFICIAL REPORTED THAT NO AMERICAN FACULTY HAD RETURNED TO THE U.S. AS A RESULT OF THE WAR. ONE CANADIAN FACULTY MEMBER RECENTLY RESIGNED BUT THIS WAS DUE TO PERSONAL AND FAMILY REASONS. SEVERAL AMERICAN FACULTY MEMBERS REQUESTED CLARIFICATION OF THEIR CONTRACT STATUS IF AN EVACUATION OF ABU DHABI WAS NECESSARY, BUT LOCAL CONDITIONS DID NOT WARRANT A RESPONSE AT THIS TIME, THE OFFICIAL NOTED. TO HEAD OFF ANY ADDITIONAL CONCERNS, THE ZU ADMINISTRATION RECENTLY MET WITH ZU'S DUBAI AND ABU DHABI STAFFS TO PROVIDE REASSURANCE AND TO ENCOURAGE THE FACULTY TO AVOID ANY CLASSROOM OR INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH STUDENTS ON REGIONAL EVENTS UNLESS NECESSARY FOR COURSE PURPOSES. AN INFORMAL CHAT WITH TWO AMERICAN FACULTY MEMBERS LENT SUPPORT TO THIS VIEW, AS THEY INDICATED THEY HAD NO INTENTION OR DESIRE TO LEAVE ABU DHABI IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

15. DURING THE BAZAAR, AN IRAQI STAFF MEMBER AND VENDOR EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT THE WAR WITH THE APAO. BOTH HAVE FAMILY MEMBERS IN IRAQ WITH WHOM THEY HAVE NOT COMMUNICATED FOR TWO WEEKS. THE IRAQI STAFF MEMBER RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM HER FAMILY URGING HER TO GET HER FAMILY OUT OF BAGHDAD. SHE LOST CONTACT WITH THEM BEFORE THE MESSAGE ARRIVED. SIMILARLY, AN IRAQI VENDOR SELLING IRAQI ARTWORKS AND HANDICRAFTS CRIED AS SHE EXPLAINED THE HISTORY OF HER ARTWORKS. SHE ALSO LOST CONTACT WITH FAMILY MEMBERS STILL IN IRAQ. BOTH WERE FRUSTRATED BUT ONLY EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERNS FOR THEIR FAMILY'S WELFARE AND DID NOT COMMENT ON THEIR SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION TO THE WAR.

WAHBA